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| **Policy 204: Code of Ethics (I, II)** | **Status:** ADOPTED |
| **Original Adopted Date:** 03/08/2022 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 03/08/2022 |  |

**Option I**

The Tri-County Board of Education is committed to ensuring the public, staff and students that school board members will be consistent, reliable, principled, and fair in the governance of the district.  In accordance with this belief and by adoption of this policy, each board member commits to following the Code of Ethics.

Board Members:

* Will listen and respect the opinion of others.
* Will be motivated only by an earnest desire to serve the school district as a whole and our community’s students in the best possible way.
* Will recognize that authority rests with the board in legal session and not with individual members of the board, except where authorized by law.
* Will abide by majority decisions of the board.
* Will expect, in board meetings, to focus time on providing the best possible learning for district students.
* Will remain open-minded and objectively listen to facts presented at the board table prior to voting.
* Will recognize our responsibility is governance and not management.
* Will abide by all policies adopted by the board, including the chain of command and meeting procedures.
* Will recognize the superintendent as executive officer of the board and empower him or her to administer the educational program and student learning.
* Will provide oversight for the financial stability of the district balanced with the need for an effective educational program.
* Will respect confidentiality, when required by law
* Will be trustees of public education and do our best to protect it, conserve it, and advance it.
* Will abide by the oath of office, federal law, and state law.

[Additional statements the Board could include]:

* [Board members will recognize the integrity of our predecessors and recognize the merit of their work].
* [Board members will commit to our own learning and endeavor to keep informed on local, state, and national educational developments of significance].
* [Board members will express honest and thoughtful opinions in board meetings in an effort to have decisions made for the best interests of the children and education program].
* [Board members will make no disparaging remarks in or out of the board meeting about other members of the board or their opinions].
* [Insert other district identified statements].

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| Legal Reference: | Iowa Code §§ 21; 68B; 69; 277.28; 279.7A, 279.8, 301.28.  |

**Option II**

Board members' actions, verbal and nonverbal, reflect the attitude and the beliefs of the school district.  Therefore, board members must conduct themselves professionally and in a manner fitting to their position.

Each board member shall follow the code of ethics stated in this policy.

AS A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER:

1. I will listen.
2. I will respect the opinion of others.
3. I will recognize the integrity of my predecessors and associates and the merit of their work.
4. I will be motivated only by an earnest desire to serve my school district and the children of my school district community in the best possible way.
5. I will not use the school district or any part of the school district program for my own personal advantage or for the advantage of my friends or supporters.
6. I will vote for a closed session of the board if the situation requires it, but I will consider "star chamber" or "secret" sessions of board members unethical.
7. I will recognize that to promise in advance of a meeting how I will vote on any proposition which is to be considered is to close my mind and agree not to think through other facts and points of view which may be presented in the meeting.
8. I will expect, in board meetings, to spend more time on education programs and procedures than on business details.
9. I will recognize that authority rests with the board in legal session and not with individual members of the board, except as authorized by law.
10. I will make no disparaging remarks, in or out of the board meeting, about other members of the board or their opinions.
11. I will express my honest and most thoughtful opinions frankly in board meetings in an effort to have decisions made for the best interests of the children and the education program.
12. I will insist that the members of the board participate fully in board action and recommend that when special committees are appointed, they serve only in an investigative and advisory capacity.
13. I will abide by majority decisions of the board.
14. I will carefully consider petitions, resolutions and complaints and will act in the best interests of the school district.
15. I will not discuss the confidential business of the board in my home, on the street or in my office; the place for such discussion is the board meeting.
16. I will endeavor to keep informed on local, state and national educational developments of significance so I may become a better board member.

IN MEETING MY RESPONSIBILITY TO MY SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY

1. I will consider myself a trustee of public education and will do my best to protect it, conserve it, and advance it, giving to the children of my school district community the educational facilities that are as complete and adequate as it is possible to provide.
2. I will consider it an important responsibility of the board to interpret the aims, methods and attitudes of the school district to the community.
3. I will earnestly try to interpret the needs and attitudes of the school district community and do my best to translate them into the education program of the school district.
4. I will attempt to procure adequate financial support for the school district.
5. I will represent the entire school district rather than individual electors, patrons or groups.
6. I will not regard the school district facilities as my own private property but as the property of the people.

IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH SUPERINTENDENT AND EMPLOYEES

1. I will function, in meeting the legal responsibility that is mine, as a part of a legislative, evaluative, policy-forming body, not as an administrative officer.
2. I will recognize that it is my responsibility, together with that of my fellow board members, to see the school district is properly run and not to run them myself.
3. I will expect the school district to be administered by the best-trained technical and professional people it is possible to procure within the financial resources of the school district.
4. I will recognize the superintendent as executive officer of the board.
5. I will work through the administrative employees of the board, not over or around them.
6. I will expect the superintendent to keep the board adequately informed through oral and written reports.
7. I will vote to employ employees only after the recommendation of the superintendent has been received.
8. I will insist that contracts be equally binding on teachers and the board.
9. I will give the superintendent power commensurate with the superintendent's responsibility and will not in any way interfere with, or seek to undermine, the superintendent's authority.
10. I will give the superintendent friendly counsel and advice.
11. I will present any personal criticism of employees to the superintendent.
12. I will refer complaints to the proper administrative officer.

TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER SCHOOL BOARDS

1. I will not employ a superintendent, principal or teacher who is already under contract with another school district without first securing assurance from the proper authority that the person can be released from contract.
2. I will consider it unethical to pursue any procedure calculated to embarrass a neighboring board or its representatives.
3. I will associate myself with board members of other school districts for the purpose of discussing school district issues and cooperating in the improvement of the education program.

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| **I.C. Iowa Code** | **Description** |
| Iowa Code § 21 | [Open Meetings](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/21.pdf) |
| Iowa Code § 277.28 | [School Elections - Oath](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/277.28.pdf) |
| Iowa Code § 279.7A | [Directors - Powers and Duties - Public Contracts/Exceptions](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/279.7A.pdf) |
| Iowa Code § 279.8 | [Directors - General Rules - Bonds of Employees](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/279.8.pdf) |
| Iowa Code § 301.28 | [Textbooks - Officers and Teachers as Agents](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/301.28.pdf) |
| Iowa Code § 68B | [Government Ethics and Lobbying](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/68B.pdf) |
| Iowa Code § 69 | [Vacancies/Terms](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/69.pdf) |

**Cross References**

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| **Code** | **Description** |
| 202.02 | [Oath of Office](https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36031104&revid=EN3s3Z5l2waOXiGG4IpxEw==) |
| 202.05 | [Student School Board Representatives](https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36031104&revid=slshfFMa2p7plusslshoZo158hKDo6g==) |
| 203 | [Board of Directors' Conflict of Interest](https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36031104&revid=NpIfJXCNcZEL2dbu7lbYCQ==) |